

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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Agenda Item 4

**Conference Room Document 8
(English, French and Spanish)**

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX COMMITTEE ON FOOD HYGIENE

**Thirty- third Session
Washington D.C., U.S.A., October 23 – 28, 2000**

DRAFT CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR THE PRIMARY PRODUCTION, HARVESTING AND PACKAGING OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

European Community Comments

General Comments

The European Community would like to thank Canada and its drafting partners for the preparation of the proposed draft code of hygienic practice for primary production, harvesting and packaging of fresh fruit and vegetables at step 3. The Code has been revised to such an extent that it could justifiably be progressed to step 5.

The European Community supports the addition of the annex on sprouted seed production as the differences in production methods compared to those of other products covered by this code and the associated risks warrant specific consideration.

The European Community supports the flexibility included in the body of the Code to suit traditional practices and methods of production around the world provided that such practices when applied properly meet the objective of producing safe food and are in line with Good Agricultural and Hygiene practices. Such practices are necessary irrespective of the economic status of the producing country. Where detailed requirements are necessary for the production of a safe foodstuff, the European Community supports the development of more specific text (as demonstrated in the Annex on sprouted seeds)

The European Community recommends to the Committee that there should be adequate separation of fruits and vegetables that have been washed, from those which have not been washed and this should be reflected throughout the code.

Detailed Comments

Although hazardous material is defined, as any chemical compound which at specific levels, has the potential to cause adverse health effects, the term is used only once in 3.3.1 where it is defined as: (e.g. garbage, manure, agricultural chemicals, etc). However, potentially dangerous chemical compounds are referred to throughout the text but the terminology used varies, e.g. in 3.1 relating to the environmental hygiene. The text should be revised to remove this and other similar minor inconsistencies.

In 3.2.1.7 the European Community does not support the use of antibiotics in the primary production of fruit and vegetables unless absolutely unavoidable, and only in compliance with the instructions provided by the manufacturer.

In 3.2.2.2 relating to the water supply, and 5.2.2.1 relating to the use of post harvest water, the quality of the water supply should be monitored and the pipes and delivery system checked and monitored.

In 2.3 definitions, the term clean water should be reflected upon by the drafting group and more clearly defined and the difference between this and potable water explained.

The second indent of 5.2.2.1 should read as follows:

Disinfectants should only be used where absolutely necessary and where their use is in line with good hygiene practices. The disinfectant levels should be monitored and controlled to ensure that they are maintained at effective concentrations. Application of disinfectants, followed by a wash as necessary, should be done in such a manner that chemical residues are removed to acceptable levels, and in any case such residues should not be present at active levels.

5.2.2.3 and 5.2.2.4: As condensate may be a prime source of microbiological contamination, particularly in blast cooling operations, this should also be monitored.